

Gathering

TRANSFORMATION

To Infinity and Beyond!

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Enter the world of toys and you may discover *Transformers*. A car can be transformed into an action figure and vice versa. Add the imagination of a toddler and suddenly the sky is the limit. *Transformers* defy gravity and change the world: “*To Infinity and Beyond!*” (*Buzz Lightyear, Toy Story*)

The Apostle Peter, imprisoned because of his testimony of faith, is writing to the church in a time of great adversity and confusion. Possibly three decades following Pentecost, Peter draws from his own experience of transformation; following and learning from Jesus, falling from grace, repenting and receiving forgiveness, and finally being gloriously reinstated by Jesus to serve as “*The Rock*” on which God builds the church. Peter says:

“*But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God’s instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted.*” 1 Peter 2:9-10 MSG

Peter reminds the church that once they entered a life of transformation, they assumed a whole new identity as a people (1 Peter 2:9-10, NIV). The Gospel of Jesus Christ is inclusive of all of humanity. Being chosen by God means to be called, holy and equipped to serve. Mercy received requires mercy extended to others.

After reading this Scripture, consider the following questions:

- Being chosen by God means to be called to relationship with Jesus (*being saved*) by repenting from sin and confessing Jesus as Lord. Have you responded to this invitation? How did it happen?
- What can we learn from each other’s personal story of salvation about the process of moving from rejected to accepted?
- How has life in relationship with Jesus changed you in terms of relying on God to make you holy (*set apart from sin and living a Jesus-centered lifestyle*)?
- Being chosen by God means that we have moved from being rejected to accepted. How is this divine generosity being lived out in your community “*To Infinity and Beyond*”? How does everyone know they are accepted? How do we, empowered by the Gospel, defy gravity and change the world from a state of rejected to accepted?



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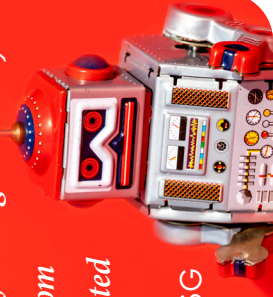
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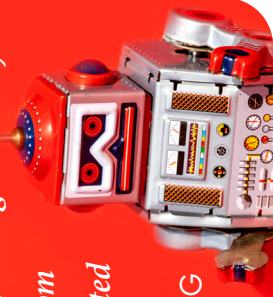
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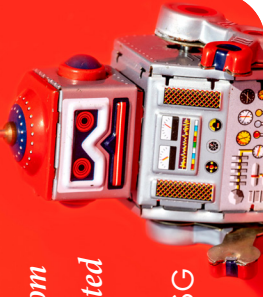
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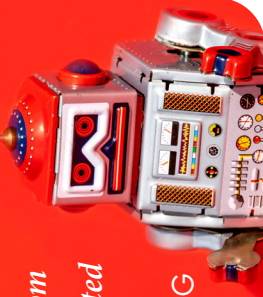
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Going Deeper

Read the following Scripture:

Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11;

Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Peter 4:10

According to 1 Peter 2:9-10 the Gospel has been preached and The Holy Spirit outpoured. Peter experienced this transformation himself and immediately moved out to serve in a state of empowerment. All fear is gone. He makes good on his personal deliverance and eventually history tells us that he most likely was persecuted for his faith in fulfilling God's purpose. In a way Peter's transformation is an example of spiritual growth "*To Infinity and Beyond*".

Peter spends his later days living into the freedom of a full surrender to Christ. From that moment nothing but Christ mattered. Cleansed from his own rebellion he received power to live and ultimately die for Jesus Christ.



- How have you, like Peter, moved through obstacles and difficulties in your Christian walk? How did these times draw you closer to God?
- How might the freedom of following Jesus empower a believer to surrender all they are and do to glorify God and help others find Jesus regardless of personal cost and sacrifices?
- Being chosen by God means to be equipped and serve others. All believers have received at least one gift to be used to serve others. Do you know your gift/gifts? What gifts do you see being used to serve others in your corps/church? What gifts seem to be missing? How can they be discovered, encouraged and mobilized?
- Ruth Graham's tombstone holds the inscription: "End of Construction- thank you for your patience". What would you like the words to read on your tombstone once you have moved on from this world into eternity with Jesus "To Infinity and Beyond"? How will others say that you, empowered by the Gospel, defied gravity and changed the world "To Infinity and Beyond"?

